

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-04 INT-05 DODE-00

PA-01 PRS-01 L-03 /066 W

----- 073830

R 150620Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3186

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9750

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION BANGKOK INFO UDORN FROM SONGKHLA 14 APR 76
REPEATED

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SONGKHLA 092

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EINV, EMIN

SUBJECT: TIN RIP-OFFS CONTINUE; RTG OFFICIALS IMPLICATED

REF: SONGKHLA 067 AND PREVIOUS

1. CONSULATE SENIOR LOCAL MET LAST WEEK WITH FRIENDS
FROM SONGKHLA WHO NOW INVOLVED IN TIN MINING OFFSHORE AT
PHANG NGA AND RANONG AREAS. SOURCE CLAIMED SOME 7,000
BOATS NOW RANGED ALONG THE COAST WITH DIVERS RAPACIOUSLY
MINING TIN. ABOUT 50 SONGKHLA BOATS THERE, ALONG WITH
OTHERS FROM MANY PROVINCES IN SOUTH AS WELL AS FROM BANGKOK
AREA. INVESTORS ARE LARGE AND SMALL, WITH ONE SYNDICATE
CONTROLLING ENTIRE TRADE.

2. SOURCE SAID THAT MINERS BRING UP ABOUT 1,000 KILOS OF
TIN ORE PER WEEK, AND THAT THIS IS SOLD TO SYNDICATE WHICH
IN COLLUSION WITH LOCAL RTG OFFICIALS. ONLY ABOUT 30
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PERCENT OF THIS ORE IS EVER TAXED AND SOLD TO RTG SMELTER

IN PHUKET: MAJORITY OF TIN SMUGGLED TO EITHER PENANG OR SINGAPORE. SYNDICATE HAS STRONG CONTROL OVER ALL ACTIVITIES OF BOATS AND MINERS IN AREA, AND ITS HIRED GANGSTERS METE OUT RUTHLESS PUNISHMENT TO KEEP OPERATION GOING SMOOTHLY.

3. SOME SMALLER INVESTORS LOSING MONEY AND THINKING OF PULLING OUT. DISSENSION ALSO ON RISE AMONG MINERS WHO FEEL MIDDLEMAN IS ONCE AGAIN MAJOR BENEFACITOR IN ECONOMIC SITUATION (SOME EVEN WISHED FOR OLD TEMCO DAYS WHEN THERE WERE MORE JOBS, BETTER WAGES AND NO RULE OF THE GUN). SOME MINERS SLOWING DOWN DIVING PURPOSELY, SINCE THEY FEEL THEY NOT RECEIVING A FAIR SHARE OF PROFITS. DESPITE POSSIBILITY OF INTRA-GANG WARFARE, OVERALL SITUATION CONTINUES LOOK EXCEEDINGLY BAD FOR DOMESTIC THAI ECONOMY AS WELL AS FOR FOREIGN INVESTORS. EXPECT GANGSTER ELEMENT SOMEWHAT CONCERNED ABOUT STANCE OF NEWLY-ELECTED RTG, BUT SINCE WEST COAST MAFIA HERE LOOKS SO EFFICIENT IT ALSO LIKELY THEY ALREADY HAVE THEIR MAN INSIDE. CASTRODALE

UNQUOTE
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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